

Quarterly NEWS-LETTER

OF THE BOOK CLUB OF
CALIFORNIA

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THIS YEAR — AND NEXT

by ALFRED SUTRO, President

THE approaching close of 1935 finds your Club in better condition, on the whole, than it has been for several years past. I am glad to report that the increase in membership, which began in 1934, has continued at a satisfactory rate during the present year. To date, a total of 106 names have been added to the roll since January 1, with a net increase of 89 for the year.

During 1935, the Club prepared and distributed to members its second series of monthly keepsakes, The Letters of Western Authors. This series, which ends in December, has brought forth an unusual number of ex-

pressions of approval from the members. I believe it may safely be said that the complete set forms a unique and interesting souvenir of the literary West, and that the Club may take satisfaction in having originated the plan and carried it to completion.

The Club's quarterly, the News-Letter, has been published regularly, and the next number will complete Volume III. During the year several improvements have been made in it, and its interest and usefulness to the members have been widened. The purposes for which News-Letter was begun in 1933 were to keep members informed of the Club's plans and activities, and also to print interesting material about books and book collecting on the Pacific Coast. I think the members will agree that both these purposes have been successfully performed.

As has been the case for several years past, the Club in 1935 has continued to proceed cautiously with its book publishing plans. Before adopting a more active publication programme, it has seemed wise to wait a more definite improvement in general conditions and a further increase in our membership. However, two publications were issued during 1935. "California Sketches," by Prentice Mulford, appeared in April, from the press of John Henry Nash. The annual December publication was "A Printer's Garland: A Typographical Miscellany," designed and printed by The Windsor Press. Both are attractive and worthy additions to the Club's list of finely printed books.

Looking ahead to 1936, there is every reason to believe that the Club activities will be no less interesting than during the present year. Members will find the 1936 series of keepsakes announced and described in

this issue of the quarterly. The Publication Committee has a number of desirable books under consideration for next year, and those selected will be announced in due course. The News-Letter will be continued and—if the Club's income will permit—the number of its pages will presently be increased to allow the publication of a greater variety of material interesting to Western book collectors.

The chief problem for 1936 is one of finances. The Club urgently needs a larger income if it is to support its present activities and to undertake needed extensions of its service to the members. This added revenue can come only from a further increase in the membership. The Club, as members know, has no other source of income. Despite the excellent showing during the past year, the membership roll is still short of its maximum of 500—and that number is essential to the proper functioning of the Club. If each member who has enjoyed his participation in the Club's activities during the past year will keep in mind this urgent need for new members, the remaining vacancies will be speedily filled, and a larger and more interesting programme for 1936 will be assured.



ANNOUNCING THE PAMPHLET SERIES

FOR its third series of keepsakes, the Club has made a selection that differs in several important respects from those of the two preceding years. Instead of twelve monthly folders—as in *The California Mining Towns* and *The Letters of Western Authors*—members during 1936 will receive, at bi-monthly intervals, a series

of six pamphlets, of from 16 to 20 pages. Each of these will contain the text of some important—but not necessarily well-known—work by a Pacific Coast writer. In the Pamphlet Series, it will be the aim to seek out and publish material that might, without too much optimism, be termed “minor masterpieces” of Pacific Coast literature; that is, work of such quality as to be well worthy of preservation, but which has never been put in permanent form, and hence remains largely unknown to present-day readers.

The material selected will not be restricted to any one literary form. Short stories will be included, but the preference will be for stories by those California writers whose work received popular and critical praise when it first appeared, but which is now almost forgotten. By printing the best obtainable stories by such authors as W. C. Morrow, Dr. C. W. Doyle, Josephine Clifford McCrackin, and others, the Club feels it will be performing the worth-while function of bringing their work to the attention of the present generation of readers and collectors. If stories by better known authors are chosen, the aim will be to avoid their more famous tales in favor of others, equally meritorious, but now little read. For example, if stories by Harte and Bierce are included, the choice will not fall to “Tennessee’s Partner” or “A Horseman in the Sky.”

Other pamphlets will be devoted to works of non-fiction by Pacific Coast authors that, by importance of subject-matter or distinction of treatment, have logical claim to preservation in permanent form. Under this heading may be included essays or articles of unusual interest and with a definite Western background; groups of sketches by one or more of the early California humor-

ists; and selections from the verse of several gifted Western poets whose work has been allowed to fall into undeserved obscurity. In short, the purpose of the series will be to select now little known material, both poetry and prose, of such quality as to deserve a permanent place in the literature of the Coast.

Only a few of the pamphlets have been chosen so far. Members who may have a favorite work by a Western author—particularly if it is short and is not easily available elsewhere—are urged to recommend it for consideration by the Committee.

Each of the six pamphlets will contain a foreword by a contemporary writer, which will include a biographical sketch of the author whose work is printed. It is planned also to print a portrait of the author as a frontispiece to each pamphlet. The typographical design and treatment of the series will receive careful attention. Each pamphlet will be designed by a different Pacific Coast printer; thus, while all will be of uniform size, the series will present a variety of design, type-faces, paper, decoration, etc. The pamphlets will be issued in paper covers and—as in the previous series—slipcases will be supplied for the safe-keeping of the complete sets.

Pamphlet Number One will appear February 1, 1936, and the remaining five will follow bi-monthly to December 1. Announcement of the subjects of forthcoming pamphlets will be made from time to time as these are determined. The Club feels that this series will prove of uncommon interest to members, and that the complete set will make a worthy addition to their collections of Pacific Coast literature.

GIFT MEMBERSHIPS

LAST December, it was tentatively suggested that members who were planning a Christmas remembrance to someone of literary interests might find the gift of a year's membership in the Club a satisfactory solution to their problem. Unfortunately, the thought was a belated one, and the invitation was issued only a week before Christmas. Nevertheless, eight members availed themselves of this last-minute opportunity.

This year, the Club is more forehanded. A letter outlining the Gift Membership plan was sent members early enough so that all who wished to take advantage of it would have ample time to do so. Here we shall merely repeat the main features of the plan. If there is someone whom you would like to remember this Christmas—and who would enjoy sharing the Club activities during the coming year—merely forward his (or her) name and address to the Club. This will set the wheels in motion and the following things will happen, in about this order: A Gift Membership card, with your name as donor, will be mailed the recipient shortly before Christmas. With it will be sent a complete set of "The Letters of Western Authors." In addition, the new member will enjoy the full privileges of membership during 1936, including a set of the new series of keepsakes (described in this issue), a subscription to the "News-Letter," and the privilege of procuring any of the Club publications now in print. Finally, you will be billed for the cost of the membership: \$10.00.

But please note: Less than thirty sets of "The Letters of Western Authors" are available. These will be reserved for new members as their names are received. Therefore, send in your gift membership promptly.

THE QUESTION BOX

*A Department for the Exchange of Information
about Western Books*

WITH this issue, we begin "The Question Box." Its purpose is to supply collectors with a medium for the discussion of matters concerning books published on, or relating to, the Pacific Coast. The last number of this quarterly contained a brief announcement that such a department was in prospect. The result was both unexpected and gratifying. So many commended the plan as to leave no doubt of the need of some such forum in which problems relating to Western books can be discussed, information assembled and—it may be hoped—conclusions arrived at.

While the aim will be to impose as few rules as possible, and to encourage discussion of a wide range of information about Western books, it seems desirable to indicate the fields in which the department might prove most useful. It is planned, then, to include questions and pertinent comment bearing on editions, issues, bindings and other bibliographical data, to encourage curiosity concerning the historical phases of publishing on the Coast, and to bring to light needed information about rare or fugitive Western publications that have never received adequate bibliographical study.

It should be emphasized that the department is primarily one for the exchange of information. Its value will depend on the extent to which collector-members make use of it, either by submitting questions or by supplying information or comment. In those cases where a request lies definitely in the field of some specialist, the latter will be asked for an opinion. In general, however, the department will depend on unsolicited

comment of collectors who may be able to shed light on the discussions.

Finally, we repeat that this is the collectors' own department. Members are invited to submit questions on any phases of Western books (except prices) on which they wish enlightenment. Those who have information bearing on questions printed are urged to share it. The first questions are printed herewith. Comment on these, and a new group of questions, will appear in the next number.

1. LECONTE'S RAMBLINGS THROUGH THE HIGH SIERRAS. There was published in 1875 an interesting little book entitled "A Journal of Ramblings Through the High Sierras of California by the 'University Excursion Party,'" printed by Francis & Valentine: Commercial Printing House, 517 Clay Street, San Francisco. 1875. 103 pages and 9 photographic prints. Blue cloth.

No exact information seems available about the number of copies printed in this edition. In the 1930 edition, published by the Sierra Club, the "Bibliographical Notes" by Francis P. Farquhar refer to this matter as follows: "It has been stated that only twenty-five copies were printed, but it is almost certain that there were more than that number, although the exact quantity is not known. Professor J. N. LeConte is under the impression that 12 copies were made for each member of the party." There were ten members in the party.

Perhaps some member of the Club has additional information about this 1875 edition.—T. L. F.

2. EARLY CALIFORNIA FICTION. I wonder if other collectors have noticed that during the first ten years of book publishing in California almost no fiction was issued? During the first years, of course, the demand was all for books on practical subjects, but from 1855 on the people had more leisure and much fiction was sent out from the East. Few local attempts were made to supply this demand until the '60s. The earliest work of fiction issued in California that I have located is "The First California Story Book,"

published by Hutchings and Rosenfeld, San Francisco, 1860. I omit the several books by A. Delano, published in the middle '50s by the Sacramento Union, although they are on the border-line of fiction. The first novel laid in San Francisco is said to be "Gloverson and his Silent Partners," which was written here about 1865 by Ralph Keller. It was published in Boston, however, and not until 1869. An early play, "The Duke of Sacramento," (recently reprinted by The Grabhorn Press) was issued in pamphlet form at Sacramento in 1854. I plan a checklist of early books of fiction published in California, but the material is scarce. Reports on other early titles will be appreciated.—H. W. R.

3. THE BINDING OF THE ANNALS. It is well known that "The Annals of San Francisco," (D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1855) was issued in both cloth and leather bindings. Two—and perhaps more—colors of cloth were used; the leather copies I have seen are all black. I believe that by examination and comparison of a large number of copies, it may be possible to determine which binding designates the earliest printing. The book had a large sale in San Francisco and it is reasonable to suppose that a supply of the first copies finished was sent here. Therefore, copies containing the stamps or labels of early San Francisco booksellers, or having early dated inscriptions, are important. From these, and from references to the book in California newspapers of the time, one might discover how the earliest copies to reach San Francisco were bound and, by inference, which were the first copies issued.

Will members having copies with labels, dated inscriptions of early owners, or other evidence that they were in California at an early date, kindly report them, stating the nature of the evidence and the style and color of the binding?—R. C.

4. STEVENSON AS HUNTSMAN. While Robert Louis Stevenson was in San Francisco in 1888, awaiting the outfitting of the *Casco* which was to take him to the South Seas, he accompanied a group of friends on a hunting and fishing trip in Marin County. During this expedition, a number of chickens are said to have disappeared, under mysterious circumstances, from the barnyard of a Marin farmer. I can find no reference to this excursion (or to the chickens) in any of the Stevenson biographies. Does any reader recall having seen a printed account of this episode?—F. W. H.

The Book Club of California

ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP

THE following new members have been elected since September 1:

Member	Sponsor
Mrs. Winthrop W. Aldrich	New York, N. Y.
Robert A. Allen	Carson City, Nev.
C. W. Andrews	Syracuse, N. Y.
Francis L. Auger	San Francisco, Cal.
Mrs. T. Edward Bailly	San Francisco, Cal.
A. G. Beaman	Los Angeles, Cal.
Nathaniel Blaisdell	San Francisco, Cal.
Dr. C. R. Bricca	San Francisco, Cal.
Miss Anita M. Crellin	Berkeley, Cal.
Charles F. Cutts	Reno, Nev.
Miss Mary B. Downing	Oakland, Cal.
Mrs. Paul H. Fretz	Mountain View, Cal.
Miss Margaret V. Girdner	San Francisco, Cal.
Dr. James A. Guilfoil	San Francisco, Cal.
Mrs. Mary Jo. Hersey	Berkeley, Cal.
W. T. H. Howe	Cincinnati, Ohio
Dana H. Jones	San Marino, Cal.
Vierling Kersey	Sacramento, Cal.
Miss Dorothy Krisher	San Francisco, Cal.
William A. Magee	San Francisco, Cal.
Mrs. Robert Morris	San Francisco, Cal.
W. H. Orrick	San Francisco, Cal.
William Reydel	New York, N. Y.
Glenn A. Schaefer	Pasadena, Cal.
Richard H. Shainwald	San Francisco, Cal.
Roger Bixby Smith	Los Angeles, Cal.
Miss Susan T. Smith	Berkeley, Cal.
Dr. Maurice Sollman	San Francisco, Cal.
Mrs. Philip M. Stone	Berkeley, Cal.
Robert Tinsman	Bloomsbury, N. J.
G. B. Tweedy	San Francisco, Cal.

Notwithstanding substantial increases in membership during the present year, the Club's roll is still only about 85% full. The Membership Committee makes this announcement because some members have been under the impression that no further vacancies remain. Members may be sure that when the 500th candidate is elected and a waiting list established, due notice of the fact will be promptly—and jubilantly—made. Mean-

time, continued help toward filling the roll is warmly invited. Until further notice, candidates are assured of prompt election and of immediate participation in Club activities.

MEMORIAL

THE deaths of the following members have occurred since January 1:

<i>Member</i>	<i>Elected</i>
Max M. Cohn	1925
Selah Chamberlain	1921
H. W. Norton	1930
Louis O'Brien	1934
Dr. John M. Rehfisch	1930
Herbert L. Rothchild	1931
Dr. Otto L. Schmidt	1921
Louis A. Schwabacher	1914
Mrs. Sarah Bixby Smith	1934
Oscar Sutro	1913
Mrs. I. N. Walter	1917

NOTES ON PUBLICATIONS

by ALBERT M. BENDER, Chairman, Publication Committee
LATE in November, members received the announcement of "A Printer's Garland: A Typographic Miscellany," the Club's Christmas publication. At this writing, some ten days after the announcements were mailed, orders have been received for 135 of the edition of 300 copies. This is a highly satisfactory showing. The Committee is hopeful that the entire edition will be subscribed within the next few weeks. The response of the members to this publication encourages the Committee to proceed more confidently with its publication plans for 1936.

Before this issue of the News-Letter is printed, copies of "A Printer's Garland" will be in the hands of

those who placed advance orders. The Publication Committee recommends that members who have delayed sending in their orders do so promptly. The variety of its pages and its many colorful decorations make this an uncommonly attractive little book. The printers—James and Cecil Johnson of The Windsor Press—have hit on an unusual plan for the book, which they have carried out with a high degree of skill. Selecting a group of early literary masterpieces—Aucassin and Nicolette, The Confessions of Saint Augustine, Philobiblon, The Vintage Song of Agathias, and four others—they have designed a specimen title-page and page of text for each. These, occupying facing pages, present a variety of design and colorful decoration that is most attractive. The little volume has a 16 page foreword by James Johnson, and it is appropriately bound in decorated boards with vellum back, stamped in gold.

For the convenience of members who have not yet ordered their copies (or an extra copy or two for gift purposes) an order blank is enclosed herewith. The price is \$2.75, postpaid. For sales in California, a tax of 8 cents is added.

¶ With the completion this month of The Letters of Western Authors series, the Club reminds members who have not yet ordered slipcases that a new supply is now ready. Those who wish cases in which to preserve their sets should place orders promptly, for when the present supply is exhausted it is unlikely that any more will be made up.

¶ The press of other material has caused the usual paper on book collecting to be omitted from this issue. The publication of such articles will be continued in future numbers. Among those now in prospect are: a survey of early papermaking on the Coast; a discussion of the California literary weeklies of the '60s; and an account of the beginnings of typefounding in California.